GSM services to J & K and North-Eastern Region

171. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that GSM Services are currently being denied to Jammu and Kashmir and the North-Eastern region on security grounds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have considered communication infrastructure as part of the developmental dimensions which is an important element of the security response; and

(d) if so, whether the current position *vis-a-vis* Jammu and Kashmir and North-Eastern Region regarding GSM would be revised ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) The Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) is operational, at present, in Guwahati and Shillong. Further expansion of fresh start of these services in these regions is not permitted on security considerations.

(c) and (d) The Government considers communication infrastructure as an important part of developmental dimension/process and in view of the same, the current position *vis-a-vis* J & K and North-East regarding GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication) will be reviewed from time to time.

Row over VSNL-TATA

172. SHRI JIBON ROY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the News-item captioned "BJP backs Mahajan on VSNL-TATA row" published in the Hindustan Times dated the 1st June, 2002; and

(b) if so, what is Government's position over the matter of transfer of wealth from a disinvested P.S.U. to a subsidiary of the company ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) Sir, the news-item under the caption "BJP backs Mahajan on VSNL—TATA row" has not appeared in the Hindustan Times of 1st June, 2002 but on 4th June, 2002.

(b) Government's position has been detailed in the Statement enclosed.

Statement

Government's position over the matter of transfer of wealth

The Government has desired that before the final decision is taken for an investment by VSNL in one of the Group companies of Tata, careful analysis and consideration and the desirability of such an investment by VSNL in the targetted Company may be undertaken through the process of study by the sub-Committee proposed by the Board. The Committee shall also have a Government Director as its member.

The scope and terms of reference of the Committee are specified as under :

I. to study and decide the quantum and the valuation/price at which the investment will be made by VSNL in Tata Tele Services Ltd. (TTSL) at various points of time;

II. to decide the tranches and periodicity of investment in TTSL;

III. to negotiate, finalise and execute shareholders agreements and other contractual arrangements with TTSL to best protect the interests of VSNL in respect of the investment;

IV. to determine conditions of draw down of the investment to TTSL linked to defined milestones to be achieved by TTSL;

V. to play a constructive role in the manner in which TTSL utilizes and applies the investment;

VI. to identify and quantify any additional investment opportunities which are more attractive and submit the same to the Board for its consideration;

VII. such other functions as may be delegated to it by the Board from time to time.

The Committee is expected to submit its report by 15-8-2002.

Outstanding dues of MTNL in Delhi

†173. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the outstanding dues of MTNL on consumers in Delhi and the details of the different categories alongwith the number of persons belonging to each category; and

(b) the decision Government propose to take to recover outstanding dues from the consumers irrespective of their category and take punitive action against non-payment of the outstanding amount ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) A total amount of Rs. 516.04 crore was outstanding as on 31-3-2002 on the basis of telephone bills issued to consumers till 31-12-2001. The details are in statement enclosed. (*See* below).

(b) The following steps are taken to recover the outstanding dues from the consumers :

(i) Consumers are informed on telephone about the outstanding dues and are advised to make payment within three days.

(ii) In case of non-payment of dues within this period, all outgoing calls are disconnected after informing the consumers on telephone that the facility to send the outgoing calls is going to be withdrawn.

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†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.